

ALL I CAN DO IS CRY

BY

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It is 2024, and my wife Sandy is now well into her eleventh year living with Alzheimer's disease. Tonight, with the help of her care partner, she has had her dinner and is already in her pajamas. Her care partner will soon help her into bed. This is the time of day, before Alzheimer's, we usually spent finishing our second glass of wine. No more!

Tonight the stereo is playing our favorite music, and we sit surrounded by the art we have purchased during our almost fifty years together. Blown Glass, African masks and head rests, along with walls covered in prints. We made the decision forty – five years ago how to buy art. And we kept to it. The only thing missing is the conversation. Sandy can no longer converse.

Sandy is sitting on her recliner struggling with the mechanism. She struggles as she does with most everything, and all I can think of is what was. All of the things she did with such ease and grace. Her pleasure in finding an item on sale. Her face lighting up when I happened to purchase the right gift for Christmas, her birthday, or our anniversary. I do not know who was happier, she or I.

Sandy introduced my entire Jewish family to the true wonders of Christmas. We fell in love with Christmas trees and placing all of our gifts under the tree. She hosted what became known as Sandy and The Seventeen Jews Christmas dinner. The years of personal training before she allowed me to select and purchase the family Christmas tree without her supervision. I had arrived. The number of people, particularly those with Diabetes, who came to her for advice and counsel. How she dealt with her three bouts of breast cancer and supported me through my own of prostate and bladder cancer. How she comforted me during my worst moments.

We worked together for so many years as business partners. Her facility with languages helping us to navigate much of Europe, including our honeymoon on a remote Greek island.

She insisted we take Greek lessons prior to leaving New York. She made it look easy. My Greek sounded like some rare ancient dialect that had not been heard since biblical times.

I look at her, still so attractive, realizing how much she means to me and simultaneously I realize deeply what will never be again. The vacations, the shows, the walks, the great meals she prepared and the wonderful late afternoon naps were no longer possible. Most of all, I miss the conversations. How I miss it all. There are no words, All I can do is cry.